

ATTENTION: © Copyright The Iowa Blind History Archive at the Iowa Department for the Blind. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, as amended must be followed. The following materials can be used for educational and other noncommercial purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to the Iowa Department for the Blind. Excerpts up to 1000 words from the oral histories may be quoted for publication without seeking permission as long as the use is non-commercial and properly cited. Requests for permission to quote for other publication should be addressed to the Director, Iowa Department for the Blind, 524 Fourth Street, Des Moines, IA 50309. These materials are not to be used for resale or commercial purposes without written authorization from the Iowa Blind History Archive at the Iowa Department for the Blind. All materials cited must be attributed to the Iowa Blind History Archive at the Iowa Department for the Blind.

**The Iowa Blind History Archive
History of Blindness in Iowa - Oral History Project
Interview with [Name]
Conducted by [Name]
[Date]
Transcribed by [Name]**

NOTE: Any text included in brackets [] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.

**Howard Craig, 62, North Kansas City, Missouri
Louise Duvall
IDB, 524 Fourth St, Des Moines, IA
October 2, 2010, 2:30 p.m.**

Louise Duvall: Would you, let's see, state the name of the person collecting the story. So, that's me. I'm Louise Duvall, and state the name of the person of the story who's...

Howard Craig: Howard Craig.

Duvall: That's right, Howard Craig. The recording is being taken at the Iowa Department for the Blind building, and today's date is October 2, 2010. And, it's about 2:35 in the afternoon. Now, Howard, I need to read this aloud to you, and if you agree I'll need you to say, "I agree" when I'm done. Okay.

All the stories submitted to this project will become part of the history of blindness collection owned by the Iowa Department for the Blind. By submitting your story, you are acknowledging that your story is a gift which transfers to the Iowa Department for the Blind all legal title and all literary property rights. You will be granting to the Iowa Department for the Blind an unrestricted license to use your recording and all the information which it contains in any manner the Department for the Blind may wish to use it, for as long as the Iowa Department for the Blind wishes to use it. Do you agree to have your story recorded?"

Craig: I agree.

Duvall: Thank you. Now, if you will state your name, age, and where you live.

Craig: Howard Craig, 62 years old from North Kansas City, Missouri.

Duvall: North Kansas City, Missouri, all right. What do you...what would you like to talk about today?

Craig: I think the thing that really changed my life was going to Des Moines Tech for one thing, you know, it really taught me a good work ethic. And, then I went to Iowa Methodist Hospital for 27 years. I developed X-rays for that long of time.

And, then I also went down to Alpha Pointe, which about a year ago, I got the Employee of the Year award, so that was kinda...kinda nice. That's Alpha Pointe Association for the Blind, by the way, and I package urine bottles down there. Normally divide...put dividers on the space balls, but the main person got hurt so I have been bottling lately it seems like, or some people say "packing," but whatever; that's what I've been doing.

Duvall: Okay, so that's kind of an overview of the subjects you want to talk about. Let me start at the beginning and ask you, "How long have you been blind?"

Craig: From birth.

Duvall: From birth. And, do you know what caused your blindness?

Craig: Too much oxygen in incubator.

Duvall: Oh, you were you a preemie?

Craig: Yep.

Duvall: Oh, I understand. And so, then where did you go to school?

Craig: The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School in Vinton, Iowa.

Duvall: Did you go there from kindergarten on, or?

Craig: Yeah, K through 12.

Duvall: K through 12. Okay, and while you were there you learned to read and write Braille?

Craig: Yeah.

Duvall: And, what other kind of skills did you learn there?

Craig: Electric piano tuning, some wood working, chair caning.

Duvall: All kinds of things you would do with your hands...

Craig: Yeah.

Duvall: Okay, all right. And, then did you go to work right after graduation?

Craig: No, I attended The Commission for the Blind in '69 and '70.

Duvall: Okay, so 1969 to '70 you were in the Orientation Center?

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: Okay, and who was Director in those days?

Craig: Manual Urena was the Orientation Director.

Duvall: I see. And, do you remember who the teachers were?

Craig: Glen Strong taught Travel. Beulah Bartlett was the typing teacher. Ruth Schroeder was Home Ec.

Duvall: Shop? Who taught shop?

Craig: Paul Hale taught shop.

Duvall: Ah, okay, Paul Hale. Let's see, would there have been anybody else? Who taught you Braille?

Craig: Oh, Mabel Nading was the Braille instructor, although I learned from Dorothy Petrucci O'Leary.

Duvall: Oh, sure, when you were at the school.

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: Okay, all right. Was there any kind of assistive technology available when you were in the Orientation Center?

Craig: Well, I don't think at that particular time. At least, I didn't use any at that particular time.

Duvall: It was really too soon for some of the things that we think of as technology now.

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: A Braille writer, but it would be manual, be the Perkins.

Craig: The only thing that, I never used it, but the only technology was the Mag Card.

Duvall: Oh, yeah...

Craig: People talked about that, but I never experienced that.

Duvall: Was that something to do with typing?

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: It must have been kind of the early, pre-computer kind of thing. Yeah.

Craig: Yeah.

Duvall: I've heard of it, but I don't know anything about it either.

Craig: I don't either.

Duvall: All right. So, after you graduated from the Orientation Center, then what?

Craig: I went to Des Moines Tech to take machining shop training.

Duvall: Was that part of the Des Moines Public School?

Craig: Uh, it was but I think it was a part of Adult Ed.

Duvall: More the Adult Ed? Okay, okay. Down there at 18th and...?

Craig: 18th and Grand.

Duvall: Grand, 18th and Grand. Okay, and what was it you got training there?

Craig: Machine shop.

Duvall: Machine shop.

Craig: Machine shop operating. Metal lathes, metal mills, shapers, surface grinders.

Duvall: Okay. Now, when you finished that training did you find a job that used that skill?

Craig: No, they were just laying off machinists at that particular time. So, I went...that's how I ended up at the hospital. They felt it would be more of a lasting job than had I gone to a machine shop.

Duvall: Now, this was Iowa Methodist Hospital here in Des Moines?

Craig: Yes and...

Duvall: Tell me again, now, what department did you work in?

Craig: X-ray Department.

Duvall: The X-ray Department, okay. So, somebody with a broken leg would get their leg X-rayed down in the emergency room. And, then what would happen?

Craig: Then they'd run it through a processor; sometimes I would get it. Or, they have two darkrooms. So, if I didn't do it, somebody else did. But, it's just basically they'd X-ray and then run it through a processor and develop it.

Duvall: And, that was your job, in the darkroom.

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: Okay, was...you said there were two dark rooms. Were both of those dark rooms positioned by blind guys?

Craig: No, just the...

Duvall: Just you?

Craig: Just me, yes.

Duvall: Oh, okay. I wonder, were you the first blind person to be...

Craig: No, a blind person trained me, believe it or not, by the name of David Baugh. He was...he was hired before I was.

Duvall: How do you spell that last name?

Craig: Baugh, B-A-U-G-H.

Duvall: Oh, there's a name I guess I don't recognize, and he was the...already on staff there.

Craig: Yeah, he taught me two weeks. He gave me two weeks with David before he quit.

Duvall: Uh huh, okay. So then, what hours did you work?

Craig: 7:30 to 4:00.

Duvall: 7:30 to 4:00. And, how many years did you work?

Craig: 27 years.

Duvall: Oh, my! Did you retire?

Craig: No, technology took that job away.

Duvall: I see...technology changed, huh?

Craig: Yep.

Duvall: Okay, well then what did you do?

Craig: Then I went down to Kansas City and started to work at Alpha Pointe Association for the Blind.

8:00

Duvall: Okay, Alpha Pointe.

Craig: A-L-P-H-A P-O-I-N-T-E, an "E" on the end of Alpha Pointe.

Duvall: Oh, okay...Association for the Blind.

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: Okay, and what kind of business is Alpha Pointe?

Craig: They...well...make and package ink pens, and they have a...they...they bottle, they pack boulevard beer, and then in the plastics department they make pharmaceutical bottles and also urine bottles.

Duvall: Oh.

Craig: Where I do it right now, I'm packaging urine bottles...put 12 in a box and then somebody else puts the spacers on 'em, and then they just put ten boxes to a big shipper, and they shut it up and send it off.

Duvall: I see, I see. Now, how long have you been there?

Craig: August of '99 to present; but about eleven years.

Duvall: I see. Are you ever going to retire?

Craig: Don't know; I'm going to work as long as I can.

Duvall: Is that right? Good for you! Well, how did you get from Iowa to Kansas City?

Craig: I have been in touch with Alpha Pointe throughout the years because I knew my job was going and I didn't know...I guess I'm not a quitter. Technically, that job probably should have been eliminated a little bit before it was 'cause I wasn't that busy.

Duvall: The X-ray job?

Craig: Yes, but I just didn't feel like I wanted to quit.

Duvall: Well, yeah.

Craig: So, they finally had to let me go.

Duvall: Well, okay. And, you're gonna work as long as possible?

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: Okay. Well, what else would you like me to know? What other kind of...

Craig: Oh, I've been in the Lions Club up here in Des Moines. I haven't done much of that down in Missouri yet; but I've volunteered here in the Library sorting talking books, making sure they're in order when they had the records. So, I've done that.

Duvall: Okay.

Craig: And, I've done some community orchestra work, band work. I play trombone and tuba.

Duvall: You play the trombone and tuba, huh?

Craig: Yeah.

Duvall: Now, did you learn that at the Braille school?

Craig: Yes, I did.

Duvall: Ah, can you read music?

Craig: Yeah, technically, yes. I mean I know it, but since I worked in the shop, I don't read much Braille 'cause my fingers are calloused.

Duvall: Oh.

Craig: So, I don't, but I do know it, yes.

Duvall: So, then do you have, what do they call it, perfect pitch?

Craig: Yeah, close to it, yes.

Duvall: Oh, that's a real gift! All right, are...so are you involved with music now that you live in Kansas City?

Craig: Kind of. I play trombone at the...in the morning services at the church.

Duvall: Oh.

Craig: First Baptist.

Duvall: Okay, all right.

Craig: I know I've also helped out...I'm a HAM operator. I've helped out in community activities like March of Dime walk and just different...I used to work the parades up here.

Duvall: So, they use HAM operators for parades?

Craig: Yeah, Oh yeah for...

Duvall: How does that work?

Craig: They just have HAM operators at different stops, and they just communicate. And, if they need, need help, why they get hold of a HAM operator and they can dispatch the...like the...we had some ambulances there in case somebody got too hot or something...

Duvall: Oh, sure.

Craig: Dispatch it to where ever they're needed.

Duvall: Yeah, okay. So, is that something you like to do like every night? You check the with your, let's see, your buddies on HAM operator or...

Craig: No, we just do that just in activities, if they ask us to serve in drills or, you know, drills or walks that they might have or triathlons they do.

Duvall: Were you here in '93?

Craig: Yes, I was.

Duvall: When the flood...so, then did you...when the phone systems went out, and stuff, due to the...I can't remember what happened, power went out, was that it? Yeah.

Craig: Yes, and then the...I went over to the Federal Building, I think. I did have my HAM radio with me. Yes, I helped 'em out then.

Duvall: Good, good. I wonder sometimes when I read about, you know, the potential of terrorist attack and computer systems going down and cell phone towers not working and things like that, how in the world would we communicate and...

Craig: Oh, the HAM operators would be one way to do it through ...

Duvall: Absolutely.

Craig: You betcha.

Duvall: Yeah. Yeah, is that something...How did you get started in your HAM radio operator?

Craig: I don't...I don't know. I've always been, been wantin' a license. Believe it or not, I got started just through operating a CB radio.

Duvall: Oh, and that doesn't take any license or anything does it?

Craig: Not anymore. You used to have to have a license although there was no test; you just shell out a form and you get a license. But, now it's no license at all for that band.

Duvall: But, for the HAM radio operator you have to study.

Craig: Yes, that...

Duvall: For a test don't you?

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: So, did you know some other operators? Is that what got you interested, or?

Craig: Ah, yeah, I knew a few, a few operators but...I don't know how I got interested, except you know through CB. And, I just thought, well, I would like to do a little more than that. So, I think that's what got me interested in HAM radio.

Duvall: Yeah. Well, as I start to think about it, I guess I know several blind guys who at one time or another have been very involved. Jim Snowbarger was somebody I shared office space with and he's a long time...

Craig: HAM operator.

Duvall: Yeah.

Craig: I know Jim.

Duvall: Yeah. Let's see, I think Sylvester, wasn't he?

Craig: Yes, he was.

Duvall: Sylvester Nemmers wasn't he a HAM operator?

Craig: Yes.

Duvall: And, who else?

Craig: His boy, Mark, is, too.

Duvall: Oh, really! Yeah, that's right.

Craig: And, Bob Ray, he's a HAM operator.

Duvall: Oh, I didn't know that. Yeah.

Craig: And, Curtis Willoughby. If you knew Curt...

Duvall: Yes, I knew Curtis. Yeah. He lives...

Craig: In Denver, Colorado.

Duvall: In Colorado. Yes, that's right. Well, can you think of anything else that you'd like to share?

Craig: Not right off, I cannot.

Duvall: All right. Well, I wanna thank you for your time and sharing, and we used our whole twenty minutes, so that went fast. That was good.

Craig: Sorry for the "uhms." I really don't like it.

Duvall: Not a problem. So, thank you and I just ended it.

16:10

(End of Recording)

Lisa Davis

03/28/2011